

Frequently Asked Questions—Data Security Incident

The Kansas Health Policy Authority (KHPA) has notified a small number of individuals that a computer disk containing information about their health records and identity may have been lost within the agency. Here are some questions you may have about this incident and the Kansas Health Policy Authority's answers.

What happened and how does this affect me?

How did this happen?

The password-protected disk was mailed to the KHPA by a company that helps process information about people receiving benefits. KHPA did receive the package with the disk, but the disk did not reach the person who was supposed to receive it. The KHPA office is secure, requiring employees and visitors to enter with a pass key or be escorted. There is no evidence that the disk went beyond our office, the password was broken, or any information was taken off the disk.

Do you know where the disk is? Have you found the disk?

While we are still looking for the disk, we believe it was discarded. To date we have not found it. But the disk was password protected and we have no evidence that someone has opened it and obtained information from it.

What information was included on the computer disk?

The computer disk contained health records and identity information about a small number of Kansas Health Policy Authority customers.

How does KHPA know what and whose information was on the disk?

KHPA received a duplicate disk. Letters were mailed to all individuals whose information was on the duplicate disk.

How do I know if my information was on the disk?

If your information was on the disk, you will receive a letter from the Kansas Health Policy Authority on or near Friday, March 23, 2007. This letter outlines what happened, precautions that the KHPA is taking, and how your information can be protected. If you do not receive a letter, you were not affected. Your information was not on the disk.

Agency Website: www.khpa.ks.gov
Address: Rm. 900-N, Landon Building, 900 SW Jackson Street, Topeka, KS 66612-1220

Medicaid and HealthWave:
Phone: 785-296-3981
Fax: 785-296-4813

State Employee Health
Benefits and Plan Purchasing:
Phone: 785-296-6280
Fax: 785-368-7180

State Self Insurance Fund:
Phone: 785-296-2364
Fax: 785-296-6995

Is it a common practice to allow data of this nature to be sent through the mail and handled in this manner?

Up until this incident, this was common practice to send data of this nature to be sent through the mail. The data was required to be on a password-protected disk, just as this one was. Since this time, we have strengthened our policies and procedures, especially concerning data disks sent through the mail. Among those new policies, KHPA will ask that all disks be encrypted and password-protected in the future.

What should I do?

What should I do to protect myself?

At this time, we have no confirmation that anyone has opened the disk and obtained information from it. If you received the letter from the Kansas Health Policy Authority, it outlines the steps you can take to ensure your private health and identity information is kept secure. For individuals who have been affected by this lost data disk, a support line has been established at 785.296.3981. As a precaution, individuals who call for additional information will be asked to provide the customer identification number listed on the letter.

Where can I get more information?

If you received the letter from the Kansas Health Policy Authority stating your information was on the disk, you were provided with a customer identification number. Using that number, you can call the support line that has been established to receive more information regarding this incident and what you can do. The support line is 785.296.3981.

What is KHPA doing about the situation?

What is KHPA doing about this?

KHPA has conducted its own investigation, and as a result, is changing how it manages mail and other processes. As an added precaution, KHPA asked the Kansas Attorney General and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation to conduct an investigation. Their preliminary findings support our belief that the disk has been lost within the agency. KHPA has sent notification letters to its customers who were known to be on the computer disk, and the letter should be received by the recipients on or near Friday, March 23, 2007.

What will be done to prevent this from happening in the future?

Even though KHPA has policies in place to safeguard information, it made its policies stronger, especially the policy about mail. KHPA will ask that all disks be encrypted and password-protected in the future. Although KHPA has a privacy officer, the agency will hire an additional person to help protect the privacy and security of customers' information. In addition, KHPA has reevaluated our HIPAA training process and has taken steps to ensure all new and existing employees have the required training.